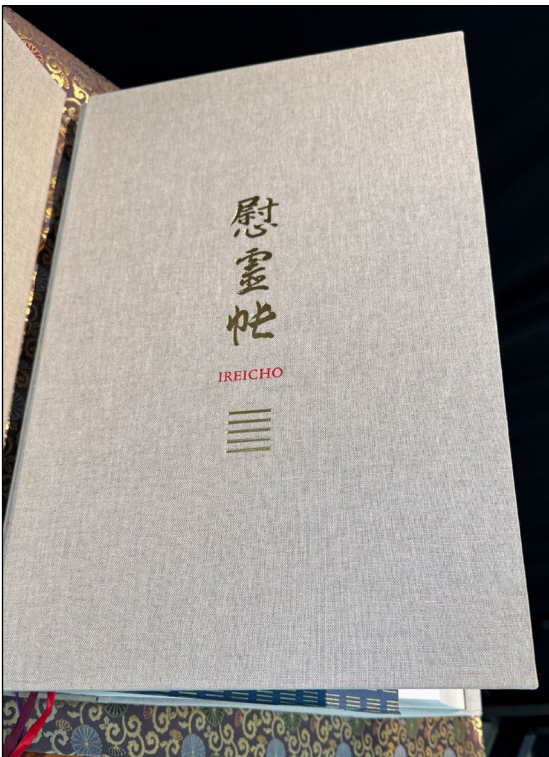


## Ireicho book monument comes to MBT



Photos by Harumi Ichikawa

The Ireicho, which was hosted by MBT in November, contains 125,284 names of individuals of Japanese ancestry unjustly incarcerated during World War II. The tile inside the book is made up of soil from the sites of 75 internment and concentration camps.

By Carl Ichikawa  
and Kiku Taura

**O**n Nov. 5–7, the Midwest Buddhist Temple was honored to serve as a host site for the Ireicho, a book monument containing the names of 125,284 individuals of Japanese ancestry unjustly incarcerated during World War II.

Chicago received the largest population of Japanese Americans after their release from the camps, with an estimated 20,000 resettling in the area.

The Midwest Buddhist Temple was founded in 1945 as Rev. Gyodo Kono came to Chicago from the Rohwer camp.

Through the efforts of Irei Project Co-Founder Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Lisa Doi, staff member with the Japanese American National Museum, together with the support from MBT, the Japanese American Service

*see ireicho, page 4*

## No place like home

*The following is from a Dharma message that was shared with Dharma School students on Nov. 2, 2025.*

By Ellen Dunleavy

If you know me at all, you know that I love going on vacation. And I guess everybody does, because no matter where you go these days there are also a jillion other people going on vacation. A lot of European cities, as well as, cities in Japan, are saying

there are way too many of us going on vacation, seemingly all at the same time and to all the same places.

On my last trip, I visited the British Museum, which it turns out is the most popular attraction in London. The museum is, of course, full of precious, fascinating and often stolen artifacts. But it's also free. However, my goal that day was not the Rosetta stone

*see home, page 11*

### inside

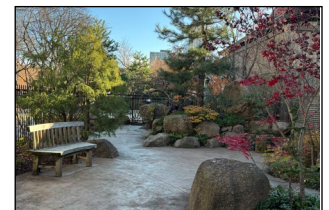
Wishing all a happy,  
healthy new year.

Jane & John Doe / Chicago



#### Holiday greetings

Share season's greetings with MBT friends. See form on *Page 8*.



#### Legacy Garden glo-up

Volunteers and a pair of experts give loving care to MBT gardens. *Page 12*.



# happenings

By Elaine Matsushita

**E**ighty years ago, JACL Chicago was formed to support the civil rights and livelihoods of people of Japanese ancestry who moved to Chicago after the closing of the World War II incarceration camps. To honor this legacy and look toward the future, JACL Chicago will be celebrating 80 years of community building, education, and advocacy on Saturday, Dec. 6. at the New Furuma Chinatown restaurant.

All proceeds will support the chapter's ongoing work and programs—including our longest-running program, the Kansha Project, to our newer programs like Intergenerational Conversations: Ripples of the Past and Camp Daikon social justice youth camp.

This event, from 5–8:30 pm, will feature a sit-down family-style dinner, open bar, silent auction of member-curated gift baskets, and entertainment. Tickets are \$75–\$150; free parking is available. The New Furuma is at 2828 S. Wentworth Ave., Chicago. Click [here](#) to register. For additional information, contact [rebecca@jaclichicago.org](mailto:rebecca@jaclichicago.org), or to learn more about our programs, visit JACL's [website](#).

## Rachel Maddow podcast

**Rachel Maddow's** new six-episode series "Burn Order" lays bare one of the most shocking decisions in American history. It's a story that reveals how an executive order authorizing the mass roundup of innocent Japanese Americans came to be, the powerful players who engineered it, and the burn order that tried to erase it from history. The first episode was released on Dec. 1 and remaining episodes will be released every Monday over the next few weeks. Please tune in to wherever you listen to podcasts.

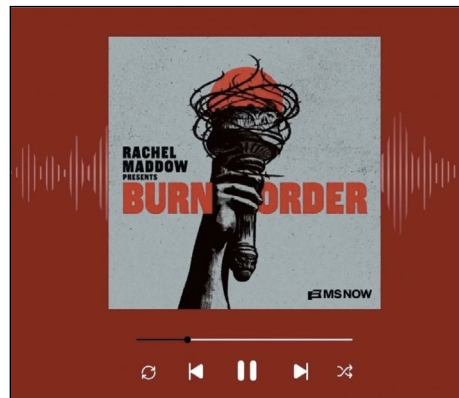
## JACL scholarships

The Chicago Chapter of JACL offers scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000+ to undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated a commitment to JACL's mission. Scholarships are awarded based on an applicant's understanding of and



Photos by Kiku Taura

**Above:** Nick Macri and Beth McDonald perform at the Jefferson Park Library.  
**Below:** Nick and his faithful fans (Luca, Dominick and Lisa).



alignment with JACL's mission, as well as academic performance and extracurricular involvement. Scholarships are open to all, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Funding for scholarships is provided by

*see happenings, page 18*



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Please send articles and photographs to: **Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee St., Chicago, IL 60614** or [bulletin@mbtchicago.org](mailto:bulletin@mbtchicago.org)

~

Don't forget to visit our website, [mbtchicago.org](http://mbtchicago.org), for more information about Shin Buddhism and the Midwest Buddhist Temple.



Photo by Joy Zavala

There was food aplenty, "It's a Wonderful Life" in the background and a friend-filled gathering at this year's MBT Thanksgiving dinner.

## Giving thanks, enjoying MBT family

By Joy Zavala

On Thanksgiving Day, our group of 24 indulged in a dinner of traditional Thanksgiving turkey and ham, as well as tofu, pulled pork, stuffing, veggies, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and other side dishes. There were also many delicious desserts.

Thanks to everyone who attended and to those who brought appetizers, sides and desserts.

"It's a Wonderful Life" played in the background and a music lesson was formed.



We are thankful for our Sangha family and MBT.



## See out 2025, see in 2026 at MBT

By Joy Zavala

Join us for the New Year's Eve and New Year's Day services.

The New Year's Eve Joya-e service will be held at 7:30 pm Wednesday, Dec. 31. This year-end service is held to express our gratitude for all the causes and conditions that have brought us to this point in time and to reflect upon the interdependence of all Sangha members and the lives we live. It gives us an opportunity to contemplate the events of the past year and to celebrate the many things that have made our lives what they are.

At the end of the service, it is tradition for us all to ring the kansho bell 108 times to call in the New Year and to rid ourselves symbolically of the 108 imperfections or passions that human beings possess.

We will then go to the Social Hall to enjoy Toshikoshi Soba—buckwheat noodles—to ensure long life and prosperity in the New Year.



Then join us the next morning, New Year's Day, Thursday, Jan. 1 at 10:30 am, when we will have a morning service called Shu-Sho-e.

We will be bringing in the New Year with a renewed appreciation for the spiritual guidance of the Three Treasures—the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

After the short service, we will enjoy ozoni, or mochi soup, using fresh mochi made at the temple's Mochi-Tsuki Festival for good luck and good health





Photo, left, by Joy Zavala; photo, right, by the General Counsel

Jason Matsumoto (above left), president of the MBT Board of Trustees, welcomes visitors to the Opening Ceremony of the Ireicho visit. At the ceremony, honored guests included Irei Project Co-Founder Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams (above right) and Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago Masashi Mizobuchi.

## ireicho

*Continued from page 1*

Committee and many others, Chicago was added as the last stop of the 2025 national tour that began at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History on the Day of Remembrance in February. The tour will resume in January, 2026.

At MBT, Grady and Taryn Hutt used their professional talents to transform the boardroom into a serene setting for the book stamping. As each group arrived at their appointed time, volunteers checked the information for those they would be stamping and were then led to an area in the Social Hall where one of the Irei team members gave them a personal orientation to the project.

Each group was then guided into the room for stamping and invited to write down their thoughts on a memento card that they took with them.

On Wednesday evening, over 100 people attended the opening ceremony in the hondo where MBT's Board of Trustees President Jason Matsumoto shared MBT's history with the Issei and Nisei—whose names are included in the Ireicho—and the challenges they faced during resettlement.

Masashi Mizobuchi, the Consul-General of Japan in Chicago, stamped the names of his relatives and then Rev. Williams gave the background of the project, described as a living monument that will eventually be gifted to the Japanese American National Museum.

Following a Q&A session, donated refreshments were served in the Social Hall.

We are deeply grateful to Karen Kano, Ireicho project specialist, and the many Irei volunteers who flew into Chicago for their tireless work. They were supplemented by volunteers recruited from the Chicago JA community, including our own temple members. Our Women's Association volunteers provided snacks for visitors and staff, and we thank Rev. Ron and Elaine Miiyamura and Ian Taura, who were present all three days.

An estimated 350 individuals came to MBT to stamp the Ireicho before it moved to JASC for two more days of stamping and a closing ceremony.

Here are some experiences shared by our members.

### Connie Tsuchiya

Todd and I were so excited to hear the Ireicho was traveling to Chicago. And tickled that it gets its own seat on the airplane.

We had both stamped the book in Los Angeles (when it was

on display at the Japanese American National Museum], but felt it important that our son Kyle have the experience of honoring his grandparents and great-grandparents as well.

It was especially moving to stamp the book at Midwest Buddhist Temple, our most sacred space.

I am beyond grateful for this important project and the temple for hosting its visit.

### Jeanne Watanuki Toguri

Although it was my second time to sign in the Ireicho, it still enhanced my experience of not forgetting about what had happened when I was born.

I had wanted to remember my ancestors who were incarcerated from both of sides of my family (Fukutomi and Watanuki) and David's family (Toguri and Fukumoto)—especially those who have passed away before redress.

This time, I went to sign the book because my name was added to the book since I was born in Rohwer Relocation Camp.

We were asked to stamp people who were born in the 1800s and did not yet have a stamp by their name. It was my honor to do it since many may not have any living person who remembers them, and I certainly did not want anyone to

be forgotten.

### Janice Nishimura

Learning that the Ireicho was making a national tour and coming to the Chicago area was an opportunity that I could not pass up. When I was told I had been granted an appointment, I was excited and made plans to travel from Minnesota to Illinois.

Friends who had stamped relatives' names while the book monument was at the Japanese American National Museum in California, told me of their experiences which seemed to differ from the video provided with my appointment email.

The procedural rules appeared to become more restrictive—limiting the number of names that could be stamped and stamping by a limited number of people. Nevertheless, it was a poignant and emotional moment when I approached the Ireicho.

Upon seeing family member's names on the pages, it seemed to give me a three-dimensional view of their individual lives at this time. During my teen years and young adulthood, I mostly heard stories about camp life that mirrored my own life—attending high school, playing sports, having jobs, running around with friends.

I know now that I wasn't

*see ireicho, page 5*

## ireicho

*Continued from page 4*

subjected to the not-so-nice stories—being told to “wait for the ship to come and take you back,” being scared, being pulled out of the classroom and told to wait in the hall, not knowing why and no one talking to you until the end of the day and then told to go home.

Placing the hanko stamp correctly was not easy to do, especially when the name was close to the crease/binding. Sometimes, there was only a crescent shape instead of a full circle.

Asked to stamp the oldest incarcerated name was a touching tribute. I wish I had written down that person’s name.

I was the first to stamp my mom’s and dad’s name. I was so glad I came to stamp.

I wish I could have turned a page or two. I wish I could have spent a little more time with the book and meditate.

### Audrey Drechsler

Both of my parents and their families were in the relocation camps. Both of my in-laws were in the Nazi concentration camps. All of them survived World War II.

Stamping the Ireicho is my way of honoring the people that were brutally discriminated against because of some trait their government perceived as undesirable. It is happening again in our country. A small group of people in power are selecting “undesirable” traits to “remove” from the population.

Every one of the names in the Ireicho has a story that may never be told. As a descendent of some of those names, I



Photo from Kiku Taura

The Taura family—Rev. Todd Tsuchiya, Takamasa Onose, Kyle Tsuchiya, Kiku Taura, Rich Taura and Connie Tsuchiya—gather around the Ireicho monument.

hope to keep their experience relevant so it never happens again.

### Susan Brown

What an awe-inspiring experience Mark and I had on Wednesday, Nov. 5, at MBT. So grateful that this day was added to the Ireicho pilgrimage.

It was incredible to fathom the immensity of Ireicho before us. Knowing that the names of our ancestors were in the book, and yet with so many names, I still found and stamped in honor of my grandparents, Uheiji and Sato Matsumoto, Shotaro and Ume Yamamoto, and, most importantly, to honor my mother,

Yoko Yamamoto Matsumoto. The reality of the connection between the book and the stories we heard about camp while growing up was not lost on us.

### Megan Nakao

Stamping the Ireicho was a profoundly powerful experience for me and my family. I grew up in the shadow of the Japanese American incarceration without having lived it myself.

Physically acknowledging my relatives' plight made my connection to their legacy feel more tangible. When I saw their names in print among the thousands of others in

this monumental book, I was reminded of all the lives affected by this manifestation of racism and the magnitude of its aftershocks for generations to come.

It serves as a reminder of the inherent fragility of our civil rights and the urgency of protecting them for everyone today. I am deeply grateful to the thoughtful individuals who made this meaningful project possible.

~~~~~

To learn more about the Ireicho, visit their website [here](#) and view JANM's video [here](#)



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# Halloween fun takes over Dharma School

By Jennifer Toguri

**D**harma School continued the tradition to celebrate Halloween with a party full of treats and games. The kids were hands-on with activities to create Halloween-themed popsicle-stick crafts, candy corn towers, unveiling a candy-filled pinata, and more. Thank you to Nick, Lisa, Jason, Tiana, and Alex for helping organize the fun.

In November, the Dharma School led the family service. Thank you to the Service Planning Committee for coordinating our services and providing the opportunity for us to participate. The special Dharma message was a reading of the book, "I Am Human: A Book of Empathy" by Susan Verde.

Next time you are in the Social Hall, check out our bulletin board. We learned about the Dharma Wheel and the Eightfold Path and turned our lesson into an art display to mark the MBT Pledge Drive Progress. Help us fill in the board!

We look forward to wrapping up 2025 with our Dec. 7 classes on Dana (giving) and Buddhism for Teenagers. Join us on Dec. 21 for a special Dharma School mochitsuki event.

We will continue to have Dharma School on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the new year. Please continue to read the weekly email for more announcements on our activities and events.

## December events

**Dec 7:** Dharma School class

**Dec 21:** Dharma School mochitsuki



The Dharma School Halloween party was filled with costumes, crafts, activities and fun.

Photos from Dharma School

# Knowing who we are

The following is from a Dharma message that was shared with Dharma School students on Nov. 2, 2025.

By Rev. Ron Miyamura

This morning is the first Dharma School service this fall, so I would like to take a few minutes to talk to the Dharma School students.

We just had the official Halloween on Friday, and today the MBT Dharma School is having its Halloween party. It is great to extend the trick-or-treat party.

When we think of Halloween, we think of costumes and masks and dressing up as

something different from our everyday selves. Maybe we pick a mask and costume to be someone or something we would like to be. Maybe a ghost and be able to go through walls and scare your friends and family. Maybe to be a vampire or werewolf just to scare your friends and family.

But the chance to be someone or something else is what is fun and that is what a mask and a costume lets us do.

However, we have to know that we are constantly many things to the people around us. We are children with parents, we are a brother or sister to our siblings, we are friends to our



MBT archive photo

Circa 2018: Dharma School students get in the Halloween spirit.

classmates at school. We are teammates to our sports teams and so many other things.

So, we have so many roles to those around us. Yet, there is only one me. And we have to know who I am.

Let the Buddha-Dharma help be your guide in knowing who you are and let the Golden Chain be your guide in thinking, saying and doing the kind and gentle things in your life and as we enjoy Halloween this year.

# Expanding visions of Buddhist Women

*"The Buddhist women, they have been there from the beginning. They have been there all along, and the problem is more a matter of what's recorded in history rather than a history of women not contributing... Without them, we would not be here. They have kept the tradition going. They have kept the people alive. They have kept birthing the people."*

By Taryn Hutt

On Oct. 19, Paula Arai, who earned a doctorate degree in Buddhist Studies from Harvard University, visited MBT to share her work on women's roles in Buddhism—not only as observers or participants but also as those who have historically propelled the Dharma, examined the Sutras, and birthed, literally and figuratively, our Buddhist communities.

*Correction: The Bulletin apologizes for the incorrect identification of Paula Arai in the November issue of the Bulletin.*

Dr. Arai holds the Eshinni and Kakushinni Chair of Women and Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, Calif.

In her Dharma talk, Dr. Arai forged connections between historical and modern Buddhist women who have investigated the teachings through their lived experiences.

She focused on the writings of Eshinni, wife of Shinran Shonin, whose letters written to daughter Kakushinni in the 12th century showed Eshinni's unwavering belief that she would be reborn in the Pure Land, in spite of some teachings expressing the impossibility of women achieving enlightenment, purely based on their bodily

form.

"My aim is to imagine a Dharma free from such limiting views of women and their female bodies. A Dharma that in this freedom fully allows people with all types of bodies to entrust wisdom and compassion. I imagine Eshinni would agree with this vision.

"Being a landowner enabled [Eshinni] to support her family with its yield, including supporting her husband's efforts to teach... Perhaps she was not unlike her husband, Shinran, who heeded the Buddhist teachings to not blindly follow but to test whether or not a teaching was effective in diminishing suffering. ... She does not betray the slightest hint that she thought being a woman was an impediment. Indeed, in Letter No. 10 ... she expressed confidence that [she and Kakushinni] were both bound for rebirth in the Pure Land."

Eshinni was reacting to and questioning writings that expressed the need for women to transform into male bodies in order to achieve enlightenment or be reborn in the Pure Land.

Dr. Arai said that "the Buddha offered a path available to all sentient beings, including women in their female bodies." Because Jodo Shinshu is a tradition of questioning, as modeled by Shinran Shonin, we are compelled to adapt teachings to our modern lived experiences, just as Eshinni did in her own time.

Dr. Arai's ability to weave story and emotion through historical writings and sutras, along with her extensive academic understanding of these texts, offered a sympathetic perspective that reflects the total inclusivity of Amida's Primal Vow, a perspective

modeled after that of Eshinni.

Dr. Arai closed her talk with a tender wish for all of us. "May we recognize the Dharma when we see it. May we trust that compassion is more powerful than any written word. The Dharma is meant to liberate, not generate suffering. And Eshinni, I believe, knew that in her bones."

After service, Dr. Arai spoke with several Sangha members in an informal roundtable discussion. She described turning points in her academic and spiritual journey, and her son reflected on how her work and studies have influenced his own path.

They discussed one of the stories mentioned in the Dharma talk, The Dragon Princess, in additional depth. The main takeaway was that women have always contributed to Buddhism, but bias (especially the traditional belief that women must be reborn as men to attain enlightenment) frequently prevented those contributions from being recorded and acknowledged. She also explained that historically, many Japanese women were also landowners and did not contend with the same kind of patriarchal oppression that we associate with Western feminism.

We offer our immense gratitude to Dr. Arai for her time and wisdom, and we thank the Niji Dharma group for planning the service and providing refreshments for the discussion.

The video of Dr. Arai's Dharma talk is available [here](#). It was based on material from Dr. Arai's forthcoming book "Of Mud & Lotuses: Dreaming the Lives of Buddhist Women," to be released by Shambala in 2026.



**Be sure to send your New Year Greetings to friends across the country in the January 2026 Bulletin.**

## 8 mbtchicago.org



# Our lifetime homework: 'Drop it'

*The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Nov. 2, 2025.*

**By Rev. Ron Miyamura**

**G**ood morning. This service is both our regular Sunday Service and the Monthly Memorial for October.

For those of us who are here for Monthly Memorial, it is a time to remember our loved ones who have passed away before us. This is an opportunity to make a spiritual offering by offering incense and a time to express our gratitude for all of the benefits we have already received. This service is a

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*Click this [link](#) to hear the Dharma message shared by Sandra Adams on Nov. 9, 2025.*

---

way to say "thank you" to your loved ones who have already passed away.

While Buddhist memorial services are in memory of a loved one, the real purpose for having

a service is for us, the ones who remain behind. We have the opportunity to make a spiritual offering and remember how much we have for which we should be grateful.

This morning, I would like to talk about my favorite ways of explaining what Buddhism and Shin Buddhism is all about.

First, the story that I call "Drop It." In this story, there are two Zen monks. One is the older master, and there is the young novice disciple.

They are walking along in the forest during a rainstorm. Then they come to a small stream, which is overflowing the banks and covering the rocks. Normally, there would be rocks which one could use to cross the stream.

On the bank of the stream, as they approach, is an old woman carrying a

---

*When we come to Buddhism, we simply need to drop it. We just have to "let go" of all that extra baggage that we have been carrying around from the past.*

---

bundle of fire wood. She is just sitting on a rock and waiting. The older monk, stops and asks her what is the matter, and she replies, "I am old, and my feet are not so steady, so I cannot cross the stream until the water goes down."

And the monks simply says, "I will carry you" and the old woman gets on the back of the older monk and together they crosses the stream. When they get to the other side, the monk puts the lady down. The old lady thanks the old monk. And they go on their way.

All through the day, the young novice is upset and agitated.

Finally, when they stop for dinner, the young novice approaches the older master and says, "I have to leave you."

The master asks, "Why?" And the young novice says, "I cannot follow a monk who has broken the vow of not touching a woman."

"Oh," replies the master, "then you must go because I put down the old woman after we crossed the stream. But you have been carrying her all day."

End of story.

This story has many meanings of course. But the main point is to "drop it" and let go of things without carrying them around with you all the time.

To the old monk, he did not see that

carrying the old woman across the stream as a woman. Rather, she was just another human being that needed help, and he was able to help.

When he was done, he let it go.

It was the novice who carried the old lady, as baggage, all day. He could not "drop it." He could not let go of the past.

And how many of us carry baggage around with us from the past and are unable to let it go? You don't have to admit it to me. But we all carry grudges and hatred and ill-feeling around.

When we come to Buddhism, we simply need to drop it. We just have to "let go" of all that extra baggage that we have been carrying around from the past.

Among the many paths that the Buddha taught is the Pure Land path of Amida Buddha. The Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Light, which are the symbols for Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. In this path, one only has to become aware of being embraced by Wisdom and Compassion.

Again, it sounds so simple, but it is not easy. Thus it is our lifetime homework.

Mostly, Shin Buddhism is a spiritual experience of living a life of gratitude and kindness.

Each of us has to experience for ourselves that awakening to change; and to see the universe as it really is, and not as we want it to be.

Sounds so simple, but it is not easy. Thus it is our lifetime homework.

We just have to drop our baggage from the past, and come as you are.

*Namu Amida Butsu  
— with gratitude and  
kindness beyond words*



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## Cold chicken

Yield: 6 servings

### Ingredients

2 qts. water  
1 Tbsp. salt  
1 piece ginger, small whole  
4 lbs. roasting chicken  
¾ cup salad oil  
½ tsp. salt  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1/3 cup ginger, minced  
1/3 cup green onion, minced  
1 Tbsp. Chinese parsley (cilantro), chopped

### Directions

1. Bring water, salt and whole ginger to a boil. Add whole chicken. Cover and immediately lower the heat and simmer for 25 minutes.

2. Turn chicken over and simmer for another 25 mins. Remove chicken from broth and rinse quickly with cold water. Freeze broth for later use or add vegetables and serve as soup.

3. Cut chicken in 1"x2" pieces. Place in serving dish.

4. Heat oil and ½ tsp. salt, stirring to dissolve salt. Cool. Add garlic, ginger and green onion. Mix well. Pour sauce over chicken and garnish with Chinese parsley.

To order a copy of "Oishii Cookery," send a check (\$15, if picked up at the temple; \$20, if mailed—made out to MBT Women's Association) to MBT, 435 W. Menomonee St., Chicago, IL 60614.

## buddhist women's association

# Time to get gift copies of Oishii Cookery

By Jeanne Toguri

If you are looking for a gift for the holidays, please consider ordering a copy (or two) of "Oishii Cookery," the cookbook put together by the MBT Buddhist Women's Association.

We only have a limited supply left, but you can find them sold in the Social Hall at the temple on Sundays. The cost is \$15; \$20 if it needs to be

mailed. At this time the BWA can only accept checks made out to MBT WA or cash.

**2026 Membership Drive:** See flier below (thanks to Allison Hagio-Conwell for designing the flier).

**Happy holidays:** The MBT BWA would like to wish everyone a very happy and safe holiday season.

**Midwest Buddhist Temple presents:**

# Women's Association

**Membership Drive**  
Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025-Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

**Why you should join MBTWA**

The MBT BWA is **open to women and men of all ages\***. It is a support group where friendships are created and the Dharma is shared. Membership is only \$10 annually. We help MBT with:

- Social activities
- Toban groups
- Dharma school
- New Life for Old Bags
- Bake sales
- ...and more!

\*voting privileges are currently given to women only until the FBWA updates the bi-laws.

Scan to learn more on our website  
Cash or check made out to MBTWA\*

\*Mail in to MBT, or drop off at info desk during service. Electronic payment not available.



# home

*Continued from page 1*

or Elgin Marbles, but to see an exhibit of Japanese prints. There was a fee to see these works but that meant all my fellow exhibit-goers were highly interested in what we were seeing.

When I emerged from our quiet enclave, I was shocked/not shocked that the rest of the museum was insane. The word "crowds" comes nowhere near describing the amount of people absolutely everywhere. Almost running for the exit, I made my way across town to the Museum of the Home.

When I read about this obscure museum, I assumed it would include a lot of period rooms. There were a couple such rooms but the Museum of the Home is so much more than historical window dressing.

Rather it delves deeply into every aspect of the home—how do we move and make a place our own; how do we furnish our home; how do we decorate; what do we do in our home (this part included a sidebar on entertainment, including a lot of old television sets); what do we eat (a survey asked about our favorite meal at home, no surprise, breakfast was a leader); do we practice religion at home; what's it like when we have to leave our home (this area focused in part on the elderly who may have to leave their home for another kind of home); what's it like to be an immigrant coming to a new place with the challenge of making a new home.

I had a great day at the museum almost completely by myself. And my visit got me thinking, as I never had before, about what home means to me.

What is it that makes us feel at home? I know I always feel relief after I have booked vacation accommodation that I feel will be comfortable and secure. And I usually become almost instantly attached to the place where I stay and think back fondly on the area as my neighborhood in Paris or London. So, comfort, security, attachment?

We also want a place where we can relax and be ourselves, a place we can return to after a stressful day or even an exhausting trip, to find some rest and relaxation.

And who are we coming home to—family, roommates, pets, our teddy bear? I know I can't live without the latter.

But maybe the relevant question is: How do we make a home?

I've been thinking a lot about my grandparents lately. They, like a lot of your grandparents, were immigrants. Their parents had known the Great Famine in Ireland and, though they weren't themselves hungry, they were poor. My grandfather said that they used to have potatoes and point. They would eat potatoes and point at a picture of a pig on the wall.

Like other immigrants, they came to this country for a better life when they couldn't see a future for themselves in their home country. They courageously came here with

nothing and found not just a community, their people, but each other.

It's not easy to make a home in a strange new place. I found this out for myself when I went to live to in Dublin in the 1990s. In the 1900s when my grandparents left for America, their family and friends held a wake for them because they felt assured that they would never see their loved ones across the sea again. When I moved, there was no internet, long-distance calls were expensive and laborious, especially since getting a land line connected (no cell phones yet!) involved a very long waiting list. Yes, really.

Though I was in an English-speaking country with a culture I thought I knew, I was still stymied when doing the simplest tasks, like going grocery shopping or getting the gas connected.

But the loneliness was the biggest challenge. Without the familiarity and support of home and my friends, my people, I was bereft. I think I spent two weeks crying on and off.

Then little by little, a new home came together. I started to feel more comfortable but, more, I found my community. That seems to me to be the real immigrant dream; to find a place where we can be ourselves, where we can belong, where we can be accepted. This is after all what all of us—no matter where we're born or where we choose to live—need.

"Where do I come from?" was a prompt given at a writing workshop I attended. Most people wrote about their family or hometown. After listening to our senseis for over 20 years, I pivoted toward my ancestors. I said, I come from a long, long line of folks who somehow got together so I could end up being born on the West Side of Chicago.

I concluded that if Louis Gates could somehow help us trace back far enough, we would find that all of us are somehow related. We talk a lot here about interconnectedness. We are all certainly connected and, yet, we are also all unique, all on our own in this world of samsara and struggle and suffering.

In my last Dharma message, I quoted a wise man—because, you know, he really does know just about everything: Sting. Yes, it's Sting again, who said quite famously after sending his lonely message in a bottle that he was not alone in being alone. "A hundred million castaways looking for a home."

We're all looking for a home—a place to belong and to be accepted. And we are all, both literally and spiritually, immigrants. We are all of us alone, navigating a life we have little control over in a world that can feel strange and at times unrecognizable. We're doing the best we can but sadly there is no GPS to point us in the right direction. It turns out that this life, this world we're living in, is the real foreign country.

Somewhere down deep I think that everybody, not just we Buddhists, knows that the life we're living—with its petty concerns and made-up dramas and needless suffering—is not the real deal, not

what's true and real. I think everyone feels that there's got to be something more, a "place" with meaning beyond our worry and struggle. A place where we can rest.

Sting (no, you really can't get away from him) said that we are spirits in the material world.

Fortunately, through some karmic circumstance, we are sitting here together in this beautiful room where we are able to gaze at a representation of infinite wisdom and compassion; where we can repeat the words of Shinran Shonin and listen to our senseis relate the teachings to us.

The freedom we feel when we return home after a stressful day or a long trip, the comfort and affection we feel from those we return to, are a mere shadow of the freedom and comfort we feel when encountering Amida's vow. Amida has no agenda. He doesn't care if you get good grades or can't find a job. He doesn't shun you if you have road rage or are rude to a customer service agent. He's not worried about any of that.

Amida is that ultimate accepting parent, he's that country. Amida's compassion is the place we are all seeking. We don't need a visa, we don't need a passport. We are all welcomed in. We can be ourselves. We can be at home. We don't have to worry about fitting in or speaking the right language or doing the right thing. We are accepted; accepted even more because we are so lost and fallible. This is the greatest gift—to be accepted just as we are.

Shinran felt that with all his failings that his only home was "hell." But he also taught that all of us, those studying on mountaintops and those simply living our lives as householders, were worthy of enlightenment, an ultimate home in Amida's Pure Land. Amida's home.

Many of us have an obutsudan or home altar, sometimes with a photo of a deceased loved one included. I always think of my obutsudan as Amida's house.

Looking at our little home altars, we are reminded of the connection between our mundane lives and our spiritual lives. We incorporate Amida and our reliance on him, into the space in which we live with the understanding that as comfortable as we may be in our world, that this life with all its suffering is merely a burning house. Amida is the ultimate firefighter reaching out to us in the dark to pull us to safety.

In one of Rev. Gyodo Kono's essays, he describes leaving for the United States and being given a note from a friend that said, "Whenever you feel lonely, know that there is one being who truly understands."

We are all fortunate enough to have had strong and courageous ancestors who gave us our lives and their legacy. We are even more fortunate that our life's journey has led us to our home, Shin Buddhism and the Midwest Buddhist Temple.

The Nembutsu is our simple yet profound way of saying thank you for the homecoming.





Photos from Terry Cichocki

**BEFORE:** These photos show how the Legacy Garden looked after the dedication ceremony in November 2013. (See below for AFTER photo.)

# Volunteers weed, prune, rake and plant

By Carl Ichikawa  
and Joy Zavala

**O**n Sunday, Nov. 16, our hard-working volunteers team did a great job collecting leaves and clearing vegetation in the temple yards. Bulbs were also planted for next year.

And on Monday, Nov. 17, two professionals who specialize in Japanese gardens started the three-day process of pruning all the trees, shrubs and plants in both sides of the Legacy Garden (see story at right). Greg Afman and Dave Rettig traveled from Grand Rapids, Mich.; both have worked with the world-renowned landscape designer Hoichi Kurisu of Portland-based Kurisu International. Mr. Kurisu designed and oversaw the construction of MBT's Legacy Garden that was dedicated in 2014.

The temple volunteers weeded, cut back perennials and roses, raked dead leaves, planted spring flowering bulbs and swept up. There were at least 15 bags packed down and full of leaves and branches. Albert used the

see garden, page 13

## *Belated fine-pruning redefines garden trees*

By Terry Cichocki

**M**any of you were part of the dedication of our Legacy Garden in 2013. The trees have not been fine-pruned into their bonsai shapes since they were first planted by Hoichi Kurisu's crews 12 years ago.

As you can see, the forms and shapes of the trees were defined.

We were fortunate to find Greg Afman who helped Hoichi Kurisu with the Grand Rapids Japanese Garden installation and who graciously agreed to prune the garden plants back into their proper forms. He and his partner Dave Rettig spent over 4½ full days fine-pruning all woody plants in both the west and east gardens.

Please visit the garden again when you are next at the temple. We will be glad to show you the improvement.

Because we had to use a large amount of our reserve for garden maintenance to cover this expense, we are holding a Bake Sale on Sunday, Dec. 7 to help defray some of the costs for the pruning.

As we now know, to keep the Legacy Garden in its best form, we need to do this maintenance pruning every three to five years. Although we would love to work with volunteers for regular garden maintenance in the Legacy Garden, the fine-pruning must be done by a trained Japanese Garden expert.



**AFTER:** Greg Afman and Dave Rettig worked for 4½ full days fine-pruning all the woody plants in the west and east gardens.

We hope you will support our Legacy Garden and either bring some baked goods or come to purchase baked goods from 9 am until service and then after service until noon on Dec. 7. Thank you for your support!





## garden

*Continued from page 12*

leaf vacuum machine around the parking lot and behind the stage. We thank Marcus Moore, Ryan Bartman, and Ian Taura, who helped fill a 20-cubic-foot dumpster with all the cuttings and debris.

The results of all the work are dramatic as you can see in the before and after photos.

During the Ireicho stamping, families who arrived early were able to enjoy the garden, a wonderful tie to the Issei and Nisei founders of the Midwest Buddhist Temple to whom the garden is dedicated.

For many years, Terry Cichocki has overseen all of the



temple's landscaping. Terry is a professional arborist and we are fortunate to have her

ongoing expertise. Thank you, Terry!



*Once faith is decisively settled, we should—sleeping or waking—just say the Nembutsu in gratitude,  
joyfully remembering that we have received Amida Tathagata's benevolence beyond measure.  
That is indeed the practice that truly returns the Buddha's benevolence.*



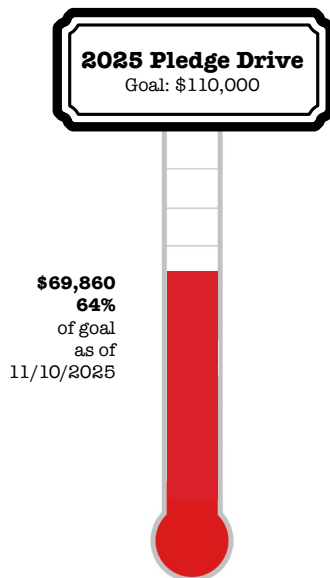
## MIDWEST BUDDHIST TEMPLE 2025 PLEDGE DRIVE

MBT welcomes everyone to become temple members, with no minimum pledge requirement. All MBT supporters are asked to give what they can financially, as well as their much appreciated time and effort. Donations can be made online at [mbtchicago.org/join-support/donate-now/](http://mbtchicago.org/join-support/donate-now/); look for the purple "Donate Now."

**DONATE NOW**

### What are the benefits of making a pledge?

- Maintains the daily cost of operating the temple (salaries, utilities, maintenance, supplies)
- Supports our religious, social and community programs
- At the \$300 minimum, allows voting on key temple issues
- Receive our monthly Bulletin newsletter
- Provides membership in the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), including Wheel of Dharma newsletter
- Ensures the continued growth of the temple



# domo

The Midwest Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledges the following donations received between **Oct. 14 and Nov. 12.**

Due to some delays in processing, you may see your donation acknowledgment in

the next issue of the Bulletin. Please reach out to the office with any questions. Please notify the Bulletin or the MBT Office of any omissions or corrections.

### Ohigan

Dorothy Yahiro  
September memorial  
Dr. Rohan De Silva & Dr. Maria Ritzema

### October memorial

Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa  
Mickey & Jean Hamano  
Michiye Hirota  
Evelyn Howe  
Gail & Bob Ikoma  
Jean Inouye  
Sharon Miyata-Sipich  
Michael Omori  
Joanne Toguri  
Tommy Yamashita

### November memorial

Mark & Susan Brown  
Ted Ishiwari  
Seiji & Nell Itahara  
Mari & Jeff Johansen  
Jan & Robert Mita  
Lily Morimoto  
Michiko Stavert  
Taura and Tsuchiya Families  
Nadine Tono  
Roxane Tono  
Gary Tsuchiyama  
Dr. Leslie Yamamoto & Gordon Purtell  
Tommy Yamashita  
Teri Yasunaga-Blasco  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

### Dharma School

Tina Hagio  
Pat Harada & Tom Rowland  
Greg & Nancy Rivera

### Nokotsudo

Michael Omori  
Greg & Nancy Rivera  
Colleen Tsuji & Paul Wanderski

### Legacy Garden

Rev. Ron & Elaine Miyamura  
Greg & Nancy Rivera

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Gardiner O'Kain  
Derek & Kristine Provo  
Blackwelder  
Susan & Robert Rakstang  
Kenneth Russell

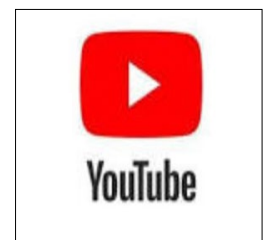
*see domo, page 15*

## You can listen to Dharma talks on MBT's YouTube channel

We have moved our YouTube channel to a new location: [youtube.com/mbtchicago-youtube](https://youtube.com/mbtchicago-youtube).

Here you can view Dharma messages from the comfort of your home. We keep about 12 months of the latest videos online.

If you have any questions just drop us a note at [youtube.admin@mbtchicago.org](mailto:youtube.admin@mbtchicago.org). So check out our channel and become a subscri-ber by



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## Midwest Buddhist Temple

### Pledge Drive 2025

**Year of  
the Snake**

**Growth  
Wisdom  
Transformation**

**2024 Goal:  
\$105K  
Achieved!**

**2025 Goal:  
\$110K**

Last year we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our temple. We looked to the past and found ourselves humbled by the hard work and dedication of those who came before us. Reflecting on the past allows us to look forward with more clarity.

Like the snake, our temple moves in cycles of growth, wisdom, and transformation. Growth is clearly on display over the past eight decades, with wisdom earned through both unimaginable hardships and joyful celebrations. Now, we move into a cycle of transformation, one that will create more opportunities to share the Dharma with longtime members and first-time visitors alike.

Today we ask for your financial support as a marker of dedication to our temple and an investment in its future, to ensure that we are laying the foundation for another 80 years of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

While there is no financial requirement to be considered a member of the sangha, you may wish to participate as a Pledge Member with an annual donation of **\$450 per individual**. More details and our *Guide to Financial Giving* is included below.

In gassho,

MBT Board of Trustees

### domo

*continued from page 14*

Roger & Arlene Suekama  
Rich Taura  
Jeanne & David Toguri  
Joy & Jesse Zavala

**Special donations  
for Ireicho Event**

Carolyn Cline  
Tonko Doi  
Allison Hagio  
Yvonne Moriwaki

**Special donations**  
Kathy Aragaki-Van Horn  
Jiuqing Cheng  
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Dean Katahira  
Karen Kikukawa  
Marie Ochi-Jacobs  
Joyce Saiki  
Chika Sekiguchi  
Mark Takesuye  
Robin Wylie

If you have arranged donations through a giving fund or automatic payment, please ensure that your name is included so that we can properly record and acknowledge them.

# Individual happiness, world peace are inseparable

*The following is from a Dharma message that was shared on Oct. 26, 2025.*

**By Jesse Zavala**

**G**ood morning, everyone. Welcome to the Midwest Buddhist Temple, to those present here today and to those joining us online. Thank you for the opportunity this Halloween week to discuss two of my favorite subjects, Halloween and Jōdo Shinshū.

The question I ask is, how are Buddhism and Halloween related?

I've observed that it's been Halloween since June with all the pumpkins and decorations displayed everywhere. This is the season when people play with images of ghosts, demons and the unseen.

Many of us may say we don't believe in ghosts. But let me tell you what happened to me. I will be telling you a story today of a Demon Mask. This is an old Jōdo Shinshū story of a Devil Mask, which was popular a long time ago during the beginnings of the Jōdo Shinshū church in 15th century Japan.

This story of the Devil Mask and the intimidation of the young widow Kiyo is a classic story of the early Jōdo Shinshū temple and the formation of the Sangha.

I'm sure you have seen a devil mask. Demons have horns—two sharp, bull-like horns on the top of the head—wide eyes, and a mouthful of sharp teeth. The Japanese Oni mask symbolizes both fearsome power and protection against evil.

These demon stories have produced books and influenced literature, including the visual arts, paintings, sculpture and architecture. We see the result everywhere during Halloween. Halloween, in addition, presents another opportunity to reflect on what lies beyond sight. What lurks in the shadows of our minds?

Devil Masks are significant because they address our delusions, our fears, our demons, our suffering. Today, I'll be telling the Jōdo Shinshū Devil Mask story. The oni, or Japanese Devil Masks, have been used in many ways over the years. They have been used as part of religious ceremonies, Dharma School Plays, and in Noh theater.

Oni masks are also often used in theater productions and as part of traditional Japanese dance performances. They are considered to be very auspicious symbols and are said to bring good luck to the wearer.

The imagery you see at a Jōdo Shinshū temple is an altar, inspired by a monk named Genshin, the first Japanese Bodhisattva in the Shin Buddhist religion.



Although Pure Land Buddhism began in China as a visualization school, Jōdo Shinshū has its roots in the teachings of Genshin and his scholarly research of over 2,000 sutras. Genshin is credited as the founder of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan.

Honen Shonin founded the Pure Land School, but Genshin's innovative Mountain Nembutsu, with a fraternity of monks chanting all night, began an Amida consciousness that permeated a new understanding of heaven and hell in society.

Earlier in Japan's history, wandering monks had spread the Nembutsu teaching to towns and villages through the popular town square. However, this time, it was different. With the descriptions provided by the monk, Genshin, Heaven and Hell became real—aided by new printing techniques.

In order to see Amida and the Pure Land, you must understand hell. There is no "up" without "down," and no "right" without "left." And no heaven without a realistic understanding of hell. Genshin provided detailed and graphic descriptions of Heaven and Hell, and the descriptions were written to be easily understood by ordinary folks.

Genshin describes Amida Buddha descending from heaven to welcome us to the Pure Land. Genshin wrote the *Ōjōyōshū*, or the "Essentials of Birth in the Pure Land."

What are the essentials of rebirth? A mind that is single in believing in the adoration of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land. We can't believe in the Pure Land if we don't understand hell.

Genshin had a profound impact on the Amida Movement of the 10th century. He gave us a picturesque understanding of heaven and hell and a realistic attitude that was good in medieval times and today. He

showed us the flames of hell, only to reveal the brighter side of Amida's light that guides us. Amida's light removes the mask of fear. Amida's Vow lifts us out of darkness.

This is a powerful philosophy, all contained in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. If you don't want to read this whole book, don't worry, Rennyo did and concluded: The teaching and practice that lead to birth in the Pure Land is the most important thing in Pure Land Buddhism. With this, Rennyo describes how to be born in the Pure Land, with a mind that is single in the adoration of Amida Buddha.

In the Western world, we also have a Genshin in Dante Alighieri's "The Divine Comedy." Both Genshin and Dante were unmistakably inspired by a Medieval world view, but their messages are universal. Dante's "Divine Comedy" introduced the Western world to hell and heaven by writing in a language that people could understand and imagery that was easily visualized.

Hell contained not just the usual criminals, thieves and scam artists, but it also was occupied by ordinary people, politicians, bishops and cardinals of the Orthodox Church.

In our founder Shinran Shonin's Chapter on Shinjin, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: On teaching, practice, faith and enlightenment, two Bodhisattvas are talking, discussing "the person who destroys hell in return, goes to hell." Buddhist hell is explored in the Pure Land Meditation Sutra, in Genshin's, "The Essentials of Birth," and the first chapter of Honen's Manifesto. All these individuals went through a universal "journey through hell."

Buddhism's universal journey focuses on the core teachings, which include an understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the concept of karma, and the pursuit of Enlightenment.

The development of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism began in medieval Japan. And it has its roots in the teachings of Genshin, who held the belief that not just one sutra alone contains Buddhist teachings.

The first half of Genshin's "Essentials for Birth in the Pure Land," starts in hell. He describes the Buddhist hells in vivid detail: flames everywhere, rivers of boiling metal, mountains of sharp knives, and demons chasing sinners who can never escape. But Genshin didn't describe these horrors to give us nightmares, but because we wear masks of pride, greed and anger. And Shin Buddhism explains how we don't have the power to escape on our own.

Behind the adults in vampire costumes,

*see mask, page 17*



## mask

*continued from page 16*

Halloween is really about something deeper. Just like Dante's 14th-century "Divine Comedy," which came 500 years later. "Divine Comedy" has similar themes of a descent into hell, redemption, and ascension into heaven. In Dante's *Inferno*, the characters descend into the nine circles of hell. A journey that takes the characters to their final destination, heaven, where they behold the stars.

Like our Halloween masks, masks depicting the devil often exist to challenge, provoke, or warn rather than to celebrate.

Genshin's work inspired the heavenly descent paintings showing Amida Buddha descending to welcome all to the Pure Land. Amida's light refers to the fact that Amida's light embraces us even in the deepest darkness, even in hell itself.

Rennyo Shonin is the second founder of Jōdo Shinshū. Rennyo revitalized the Japanese Buddhist temple and sangha, attracting many followers. Rennyo standardized the practice of saying Namu Amida Butsu. He lived in a turbulent time of war, social upheaval and famine, and also suffered religious persecution.

During the 15th century, he established uniform rituals, ceremonies and activities that allowed the temple to become an independent denomination. Rennyo built a temple at Yoshizaki that quickly became a lively and important religious and social center of activity.

Critical to Rennyo's appeal was his focus on women. Not only did women face discrimination in a male-dominated society, but they also faced a kind of spiritual discrimination. Viewed as weak and vulnerable, ancient Buddhist teachings spoke of the near impossibility of their religious salvation.

On the contrary, Rennyo taught that women were especially beneficiaries of the Buddha's compassion. Consequently, many women joined the sangha. Rennyo clarified Shinran's teachings, provided a simple code of conduct, and reformed the temple hierarchy and liturgy.

As part of Rennyo's reforms, he elevated the status of Shinran's hymn, the *Shōshinge*, which was originally printed in Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Based on the absolute authority of the *Sutras*, which Shinran taught, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* contains the entirety of the Buddha's highest teachings.

Rennyo frequently quarreled with his stepmother, and she attempted to have her own son installed as the official head of the church. Rennyo was the son of the 7th "Patriarch" of our Japanese "Mother Church." Rennyo, who was born out of wedlock when his father was only 18, struggled against his karma.

His mother, a servant, was sent away when Rennyo was only 6 years old. Several times throughout his life, he attempted to find her, with no success. Rennyo wrote many letters addressing the concerns of women, affected by his past experiences, such as his separation from his mother as a child, and the death of his wives and daughters.

At Yoshizaki, Rennyo organized plays and brought in performers as innovative ways to propagate the Buddhist teachings. The "Tale of the Devil Mask" is found in many forms and has been performed as a Nōh play. A famous play associated with Jōdo Shinshū is called "The Devil Mask of Daughter-in-Law Intimidation."

It's been performed at Jōdo Shinshū services and has become part of Yoshizaki folklore. Sometimes, the story is referred to as "The Tale of the Flesh-Adhering Mask." A defeated samurai and his family took up farming in a nearby village. Illness struck, taking his life and those of his two sons. Left behind were his mother and his wife Kiyo.

Life was extremely difficult for the two women. The young widow Kiyo came to accept her harsh life yet yearned to journey to the Pure Land to escape her suffering. On the anniversary of her husband's death, she visited Yoshizaki and heard Rennyo's teachings. She attained deep faith and, thereafter, frequently visited the temple.

However, her mother-in-law was a misguided person filled with resentment and greed. She made life hard for Kiyo by filling her days with chores and punishments. Kiyo reacted by merely going to Yoshizaki at night.

The old woman concocted a plan. She retrieved her family's old Devil Mask, which she would use to scare Kiyo and stop her from going to the temple. Dressing in a plain white kimono, she put on the mask, went to a dark valley pass, hid behind some bushes, and waited for her daughter-in-law.

Lurking in the shadows, the mother-in-law, disguised as the devil, would leap out as Kiyo unwittingly approached. Though frightened, Kiyo soon calmed down and calmly bowed to the demon and exclaimed, "You, too, will one day also become a Buddha.

"I don't have any money. If you are going to eat me, then eat me. If you are going to drink my blood, then drink. But faith in the diamondlike Other-Power will never be consumed." Then, reciting "Namu Amida Butsu," she continued on her way.

The old woman hurried back home and tried to take off the mask, but the mask was stuck to her skin. What would she say to Kiyo? She began feeling ashamed. Kiyo returned home and was startled to see the same devil slumping in a dark corner.

Suddenly, she heard her mother-in-law's voice letting out a scream. "I am so ashamed," she cried, and confessed her jealousy, her resentment, and how she tried to scare her.

Feeling for her mother-in-law, Kiyo told her that Rennyo said, regardless of how good or bad someone was, anyone who sincerely asked Amida for help and recited the Nembutsu would become a Buddha. And for the first time in her life, the old woman recited, "Namu Amida Butsu."

As she said the words, the Devil mask suddenly fell off. The old woman became a person of self-reflection.

After that, the mother and her daughter-in-law visited Yoshizaki and listened to the Buddhist teachings from Rennyo.

This story was recorded on a woodblock print, which states the mask was given to Rennyo and was bestowed to the temple. The devil mask reflects the mother's state of mind. The horns represent resentment, the fierce eyes show anger, and the sharp teeth symbolize hurtful words.

Only after the mother realized she was an evil person and took refuge in the Nembutsu teaching did the mask fall off.

Individual happiness and world peace are inseparable from creating peace in society. The inner transformation of a person's life is inseparable from creating happiness in society.

This is an ongoing and dynamic process and not a destination. This is a compassionate movement with a central practice of sharing the teachings of Compassionate Buddhism with others through dialogue and discussion. It involves contributing to society through activities that support peace, culture and education. This can include promoting disarmament, human rights and sustainable development.

The story holds deep religious significance and conveys the teachings of Shin Buddhism in a compelling and entertaining way. It also reflects Rennyo's style of engaging followers and propagating Jōdo Shinshū.

The message is clear that realizing one's ignorance and evil mind leads to a life of self-reflection and taking refuge in the Nembutsu. Most importantly, women and the outcasts of society are especially embraced by the Buddha Dharma.

Do you know what the opposite of evil is? "Evil" spelled backwards is "live."

Our service to others, and to our art, is what transforms us. And the singleness of mind is the key.

I want to thank you for listening. Please put your hands together in Gassho.

*Namu Amida Butsu*

## happenings

Continued from page 2

generous donations from JACL Chicago members and the greater Chicago Japanese American community.

All application materials are due by email to [scholarships@jaclchicago.org](mailto:scholarships@jaclchicago.org) by 11:59 pm Central Time on Sunday, March 1, 2026. Awards will be distributed at the annual Scholarship Luncheon on Sunday, May 17, 2026. For more information and application materials, please click [here](#).

### Taiko Legacy

**Mari** and **Kailani Yu** will be performing with Tsukasa Taiko in Taiko Legacy 22, the annual celebration of Japanese classical arts. The event will be held at 2 pm Saturday, Dec. 20 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Tickets (\$25; \$20 for seniors 65 and older; \$10 for students and teachers) are available [here](#).

### Macri magic

**Nick Macri** and his duo partner, tuba player, **Beth McDonald**, performed at the Jefferson Park Library on Nov. 15. The experimental music, entirely improvised, was creative and transporting. **Kiku Taura** was there, as was the Macri family. MBT has so many talented members!

### A friendly, furry audience

**Elaine Matsushita** saw a kitty smile! And another cutie rolling like it was in a heavenly food coma! Really! She and **Dean Katahira** got to play for the sweetest kitties and pups at the Anti-Cruelty Society on Nov. 24—thanks to a wonderful nonprofit called Wild Tunes, which brings live music to animal shelters to soothe some souls. Wild Tunes was started by 12-year-old **Yuvi Agarwal** in Houston, and he's brought the program to eight other states. "What a joy and honor to be among the first Wild Tunes musicians in Chicago," says Elaine. (And they were caught by CBS' **Noel Brennan**, who did a beautiful job capturing the [Wild Tunes' Chicago debut](#).) By the way, Dean and Elaine will be back at the Anti-Cruelty Society, playing for the animals on Dec. 9 (and, on Dec. 14, they'll be playing with the **Ravenswood Community Orchestra** for its holiday concert at St. Sylvester's, 2157 N. Humboldt Blvd. It starts at 4 pm.).

### Good news from Hawaii

**Christina Szabo** is back in Hawaii, this time with **Miya** and **Justin**, visiting their grandparents and **John** for Thanksgiving. "My dad is 'isshokenmei ganbatte iru,'" says Christina, "exercising every day and making remarkable progress." (By the way, with help from AI, one would learn that Christina's dad is "doing his best with all his heart.")

### Northern Lights sighting

**Connie Tsuchiya** shared an amazing photo of the Northern Lights from her and **Rev. Todd**'s new/old home in Minneapolis. "This was our view of the Aurora Borealis

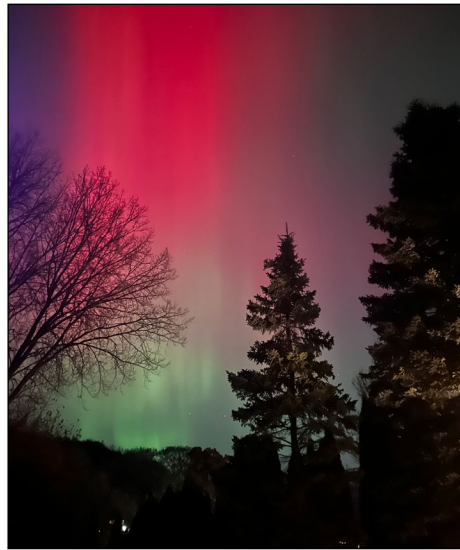


Photo above from Connie Tsuchiya

**Above:** The Aurora Borealis as seen from Connie and Rev. Todd Tsuchiya's Minneapolis backyard.

**Right:** Dean Katahira and Elaine Matsushita play for the animals at the Anti-Cruelty Society.

from the our backyard deck," she says. "The colors evolved over the course of the night. It was a stunning evening in Minnesota."

### Sad news

We were saddened to learn of the passing of **Suzuko Kawaguchi**, longtime MBT friend and mother of **Hiroko Kawaguchi Warshauer**. Mrs. Kawaguchi was born on July 24, 1925 and passed away peacefully on Nov. 12, 2025 at the age of 100 in San Marcos, Texas.

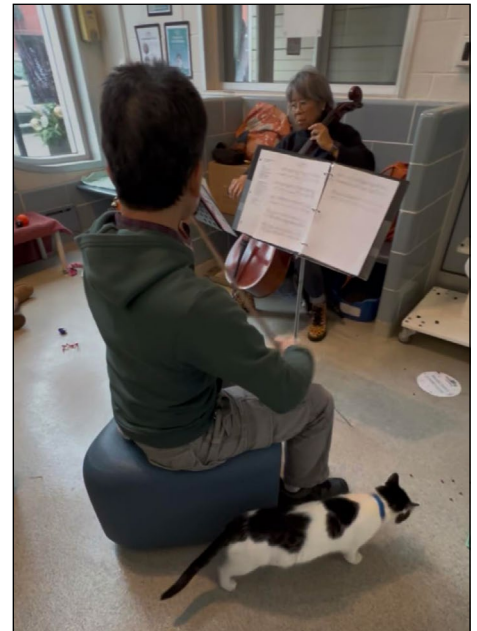


Suzuko was born on the island of Awaji. After her family moved to Kyoto, she went to Fukuchiyama Dressmaking school and then to Kyoto Women's College majoring in Home Economics.

She began her career as a teacher in Kyoto, teaching home economics and sewing. Her many skills would come in handy when she immigrated to the US in the following decade.

Suzuko met **Motohiro Kawaguchi**, originally from Tottori, and they married in 1949. They lived near Suzuko's parents' home and later moved to Kizu and welcomed their daughter, Hiroko, and then their son, Yoshihiro.

In 1960, Suzuko and her family immigrated to the United States to join Motohiro's parents, **Yoshikazu** and **Mitsu Kawaguchi** who were living in Chicago. Suzuko helped manage her father-in-law's apartment on



the South Side before the family moved to the North Side where **Jiro**, their youngest son was born. The family later moved to the Lakeview area where Suzuko managed Sun Cleaners and did alterations. She later began doing alterations and fittings at Kane's Boutique in the Ambassador East Hotel and then joined the alterations and fitting department at Carson Pirie Scott department store. The management appreciated her fine sewing skills and asked her to work on altering designer clothes at the Corporate Level and bridal dresses until her retirement in 1998.

Suzuko and Motohiro had been married 49 years and were living in Chicago when Motohiro passed away in 1998. Suzuko retired that year from work but continued her crafts particularly sharing her art with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In 2009, Suzuko and Yoshihiro moved to San Marcos, TX to be near Hiroko and her family. She is survived by her children **Jiro Kawaguchi** of Charlotte and **Hiroko Kawaguchi Warshauer (Max)** of San Marcos; four grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at in San Marcos, Texas on Nov. 23. Memorial donations may be made to the [Midwest Buddhist Temple](#) or to a charity of your choice.

### Happy birthday to...

We would like to send happy birthday wishes to other friends born in the month of December:

**Henley Carsten** / Dec. 7

**Albert Sora** / Dec. 11

**Kevin Endo** / Dec. 11

**Elaine Matsushita** / Dec. 18

**Leslie Yamamoto** / Dec. 18

**Bob Sutter** / Dec. 18

**Carl Ichikawa** / Dec. 19

**Erin Chikaraishi** / Dec. 19

**Alan Endo** / Dec. 24





## Class will teach how to use furoshiki to wrap things

By Joy Zavala

**L**earn how to wrap various shapes and sizes with Japanese cloth. Bring your own furoshiki or choose from

a variety of cloths from Japan. The cost is \$10 and proceeds will help fund the Legacy Garden pruning project.

## Consider donating socks, blankets and outerwear

By Joy Zavala

**C**old weather is now upon us and people at tent cities in Chicago can use blankets, new or gently used adult coats, scarves, gloves and hats, along with new warm socks. If we have any items left over, we will donate them to homeless shelters.

A bin is set up in the Social Hall, and we will drop off items with our sandwiches on the



last Saturday of the month through the winter.

## December memorials

On the first Sunday of each month, the Midwest Buddhist Temple holds a collective Monthly Memorial Service during the regular Sunday Family Service, when loved ones can be remembered and honored.

Although memorial services are held in memory of a loved one who has passed away, the purpose of the memorial service is for us, the living, the ones who remain behind. The memorial service provides an opportunity to express appreciation and gratitude for the many benefits we have received from the person who passed away. These are the names of temple friends who have passed away in November, and who we will remember during the MBT service on Dec. 4.

| December |                   | 1990 | Marion Konishi      |
|----------|-------------------|------|---------------------|
| 1922     | Kisaku Kawachi    | 1992 | Kayla Shawn Jarvis  |
| 1936     | Kohei Isoda       | 1994 | Fusa Hirata         |
| 1944     | Makoto Mizuki     |      | Hideko              |
| 1945     | Yoichi Doi        |      | Matsushima          |
| 1955     | Genichiro Mizuki  |      | Leighton            |
| 1956     | Misue Matsushima  |      | Willgerodt          |
|          | Kanichi Okita     | 1995 | Misao Kumata        |
| 1958     | Torajiro Hiraiwa  | 1996 | James Arakawa       |
|          | Mikito Masukane   |      | M. Lillian Naritoku |
|          | Tsue Murakami     |      | Min Wakita          |
| 1959     | Kisao Hashimoto   |      | Opal Reinhart       |
|          | Masayuki          | 1997 | Haruno Masukane     |
|          | Murakami          |      | Bessie Yamashita    |
| 1960     | Keiko Marilyn     | 1998 | Peggy Misako        |
|          | Takaki            |      | Arndt               |
| 1963     | Umezuichi         |      | Yukichi Yoshimura   |
|          | Kurasaki          |      | Martha Tanaka       |
|          | Katsusaburo       | 1999 | Michie Kobata       |
|          | Utsunomiya        | 2000 | Chiyo Nakamura      |
| 1964     | Denjiro Yamamoto  | 2001 | Yukie Yoshimura     |
| 1965     | Kiroku Teshima    | 2002 | Anna Saiki          |
| 1966     | Hideichi Tanaka   | 2005 | Thomas Kaihara      |
| 1967     | Masa Taguchi      | 2008 | James K. Imanaka    |
| 1968     | Henry Kenichi     |      | Dane Kikukawa       |
|          | Tsuru             | 2010 | Sam Morimoto        |
| 1969     | Florence Kang     |      | Betty Masako        |
|          | Hajime Yoshimura  |      | Nakanishi           |
| 1970     | Martha M.         | 2011 | Fumiko Hayashi      |
|          | Kamihana          | 2012 | Yuri Tsuchiyama     |
| 1972     | Shojiro Maekawa   | 2013 | Fusako Yokoyama     |
| 1973     | Ichimi Harada     |      | George Yoshihara    |
| 1974     | Wakamatsu         | 2015 | Catherine Shiraga   |
|          | Fujisawa          |      | Roy Teshima         |
| 1975     | Rev. Gyodo Kono   | 2016 | Kazlinn Sugiyama    |
|          | Mitsuru Mitsuoka  | 2019 | Yoshiko Yoshihara   |
| 1978     | Komura Okita      | 2020 | Michiko Ichikawa    |
| 1980     | Margaret Nakao    | 2021 | June Kimie Aragaki  |
|          | Kubota            |      | Kiyoko Janice       |
|          | Takashi Nakao     |      | Koizumi             |
| 1981     | James Yasukawa    |      | Kevin Loonam        |
|          | Chiyo Yoshimura   |      | Jason Wilhelm       |
| 1982     | Ai Sumita         |      | Kevin 'Kj' Wilhelm  |
| 1983     | Sada Tanaka       | 2024 | Shigeo              |
| 1984     | Shigeo Miyata     |      | Yoshimura           |
|          | Nancy Tsuruko     |      |                     |
|          | Sata              |      |                     |
| 1985     | Yoshito Hashimoto |      |                     |
| 1986     | Yoshiko Yoshimoto |      |                     |
| 1987     | Frank Chojiro     |      |                     |
|          | Kamoo             |      |                     |
|          | Kinko Tsubouchi   |      |                     |



## save the dates

**DEC 7** Please come and shop for some wonderful baked treats or consider donating baked goods to support the temple's Legacy Garden. Proceeds will help defray costs of the garden pruning project.

**Time:** Before and after service. **Location:** MBT Social Hall. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**DEC 7** Learn how to wrap various shapes and sizes with Japanese cloth. Bring your own furoshiki or choose from a variety of cloths from Japan. Proceeds will help defray costs of the Legacy Garden pruning project.

**Time:** After service. **Location:** MBT Social Hall. **To register:** Sign up at MBT or click [here](#).

**DEC 20** We hope to see you at our annual Mochitsuki! Plates of nine mochi will be sold for \$10. Light snacks and beverages will be provided.

**Time:** 8 am to noon. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Please contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**DEC 21** It's the Dharma School kids' turn to make fresh mochi.

**Time:** 10:45 am. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Please contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**DEC 28** Join us for our last Homeless Project sandwich-making day of 2025. We will make sandwiches at the temple and also accept sandwiches made at home and dropped off at the temple.

**Time:** Sandwich-making at noon; dropoffs of sandwiches made at home at 1 pm. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801, if you would like to participate.

**DEC 31** We will hold a New Year's Eve Joya-e service to express our gratitude for all the causes and conditions that have brought us to this point in time and to reflect upon the interdependence of all Sangha members and the lives we live. At the end of the service, it is tradition for us all to ring the kansho bell 108 times to call in the New Year and to rid ourselves symbolically of the 108 imperfections or passions that human beings possess. We will then go to the Social Hall to enjoy Toshikoshi Soba, which are buckwheat noodles, to ensure long life and prosperity in the New Year.

**Time:** 7:30 pm. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Sign up online or contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

**JAN 1** Come join us on New Year's Day for our ShuSho-e service. We will be bringing in the New Year with a renewed appreciation for the spiritual guidance of the Three Treasures—the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. After the short service, we will enjoy ozoni, or mochi soup, with fresh mochi made at the temple's Mochi-tsuki Festival.

**Time:** 10:30 am. **Location:** MBT. **More information:** Sign up online or contact the MBT Office, 312.943.7801.

# DEC

at midwest buddhist temple

**7**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Monthly Memorial Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura  
**Before and after service** Bake Sale  
**After service** Furoshiki Class (see details at left)

**14**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Bodhi Day Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura

**20**  
SATURDAY  
8:15 am Mochi-Tsuki Festival (see details at left)

**21**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Rev. Kono Memorial Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura  
10:45 am Dharma School Mochi-Tsuki (see details at left)

**28**  
SUNDAY  
10:30 am Family Service / Cliff Long

**31**  
SUNDAY  
7:30 pm New Year's Eve Service / Rev. Ron Miyamura



Clayton Hamano - President

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